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Mitchell Won't Quiet Hoover

FBI Director Is Praised by Attorney General

By MARK BROWN

WASHINGTON (AP) — Saying that J. Edgar Hoover "can account for his own statements," Atty. Gen. John N. Mitchell rejected Friday any suggestion that he muzzle the FBI chief.

"I don't have to approve or disapprove of his statements," Mitchell told his first full-scale news conference in five months. "I can tell you, as I have said before, that I have received 1,000 per cent cooperation from Mr. Hoover and from where I sit he is doing a mighty fine job."

Mitchell said also the federal government has done all it can in investigating the killing of two young Negroes at Jackson State College in Mississippi and that a decision has not yet been made on a federal grand jury probe of the death of four students at Kent State University.

He said the Nixon administration is developing a policy on housing desegregation in the suburbs that he hopes will be completed early next year.

50 DUAL SYSTEMS

Mitchell said only 50 of the approximately 2,700 school districts in the South have not yet dropped dual systems based on race, and said the government is moving against both in-school segregation and mass firings of black teachers in nominally desegregated districts.

On his own future, and speculation that he might resign shortly to prepare President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign, Mitchell told reporters:

"No one has asked me to leave; nobody has asked me to take any other employment, and if I'm thinking of what you're thinking, I'm sure as hell not going to volunteer for it."

Hoover's barbs at former Atty. Gen. Ramsey Clark, whom he called a "jellyfish" and a "softie," and his references to Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, who he said "can't shoot very straight," have raised criticism of the 76-year-old director and at least one call for his resignation.

BERRIGAN CONTROVERSY

Another outcry came when Hoover told a Senate subcommittee that the brothers Phillip and Daniel Berrigan, the anti-war priests who are now serving prisoner terms for destroying draft records, were head of a conspiracy to kidnap a high government official.

Critics have demanded that unless there is sufficient evidence to indict the Berrigans, Hoover should be made to apologize and retract his statement.

Mitchell said the Justice Department does have in progress an investigation of the alleged plot, but would not elaborate. With regard to Hoover, he said:

"Until such time as Mr. Hoover takes any such actions—which he has not to date—that need to be accounted for to me, then that is not of my concern. As of such time that he might take such actions that should be accounted for to me, then it will be my concern."

Asked whether he thinks the Berrigans' rights may have been violated by Hoover's accusation, Mitchell replied: "No, I do not believe they were."

STUDY REPORT

Mitchell said the Justice Department is still studying the report of the Portage County, Ohio, grand jury that exonerated National Guardsmen who were on the Kent State campus when four students were killed and nine wounded last May.

At Jackson State, where two blacks were killed in a hail of bullets from police and highway patrolmen, both a state grand jury and a federal grand jury were dismissed without making indictments.

Mitchell said the federal grand jury was called because the Justice Department "was not satisfied with the results of the state grand jury." But he said the conclusion of the federal jury probe "was not for the Justice Department to approve or criticize."

"We've done the best we could and the judicial process has taken its course," he said.